



UNITED STATES PATENT AND TRADEMARK OFFICE

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE
United States Patent and Trademark Office
Address: COMMISSIONER FOR PATENTS
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, Virginia 22313-1450
www.uspto.gov

APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
-----------------	-------------	----------------------	---------------------	------------------

09/933,298

08/20/2001

Brian D. Payson

231

5694

7590

04/20/2004

James J. Hill
Emrich & Dithmar
Suite 3000
300 S. Wacker Dr.
Chicago, IL 60606

EXAMINER

SWARTHOUT, BRENT

ART UNIT

PAPER NUMBER

2636

DATE MAILED: 04/20/2004

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/933,298

Applicant(s)

PAYSON ET AL.

Examiner

Brent A Swarthout

Art Unit

2636

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 02 February 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is FINAL. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 1-10 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 1-4, 6-8 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 5, 9 and 10 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☐ The drawing(s) filed on _____ is/are: a) ☐ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☐ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☐ None of:
1. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
2. ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
3. ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☐ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☐ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☐ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date _____.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

a. Claims 1-4 and 6-8 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Chen et al. in view of Below et al. and Ellis et al.

Chen discloses an Ethernet switching hub comprising a casing including a wall, plural connector assemblies for RJ45 type connections, and a quick disconnect connector adjacent the connector assemblies. Such an arrangement in the prior art conventionally includes an Ethernet switch controller with transceiver or equivalent wired connections to the connector assemblies.

In order to have connector assemblies usable for industrial purposes, Below teaches desirability of using sealing o-ring means at the connector assemblies to prevent water damage (see abstract, Fig. 7).

Furthermore, Ellis teaches desirability of using o-ring means to seal quick disconnect assembly from water damage (abstract, Fig. 5).

It would have been obvious to utilize sealing means as taught by Ellis and Below in conjunction with an Ethernet switching hub as taught by Chen, in order to allow a switching hub to be utilized in an industrial environment without being subject to water damage.

Regarding claim 2, Chen teaches having quick disconnect means to the side of the connector assemblies (Fig. 6).

Regarding claim 3, Below teaches use of peripheral flange and sealing ring in groove (Fig. 4B).

Regarding claim 4, Below teaches use of a threaded nut 64 to secure assembly to casing.

Regarding claim 6, Below teaches use of recesses for receiving projecting ears of connectors (Fig. 1A), which is conventional in the art.

Regarding claim 8, Ellis teaches use of sealing ring with quick disconnect connector (Fig. 5).

2. Claims 5,9 and 10 are objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

3. The disclosure is objected to because of the following informalities: In claim8, line 5 "of said of said" is not grammatically correct.

Appropriate correction is required.

4. Regarding applicant's remarks on page 9, Below is directed to protecting an RJ-45 connector at a protective casing (col. 12, fig. 3) in an industrial environment. Use of a seal as disclosed by Ellis in conjunction with the teachings of Chen and Below would have led one of ordinary skill in the art to include a wall seal to keep contaminants out of the connector .

4. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.

6. Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Brent A Swarthout whose telephone number is 703-305-4383. The examiner can normally be reached on M-F from 6:30 to 4:00.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Jeff Hofsass, can be reached on (703) 305-4717. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is (703) 872-9306

Any inquiry of a general nature or relating to the status of this application or proceeding should be directed to the receptionist whose telephone number is 703-305-4700.

Application/Control Number: 09/933,298
Art Unit: 2636

Page 5

Brent Swarthout
Brent A Swarthout
Examiner
Art Unit 2636

**BRENT A. SWARTHOUT
PRIMARY EXAMINER**